

ORIGINAL

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
FORT WORTH DIVISION
U.S. DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
FILED

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

CHRISTIAN MARTINEZ (01)

AUG 11 2022

No. 4:22-MJ-662
By: CLERK U.S. DISTRICT COURT
Deputy

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, Zachary Bowen, a Special Agent (SA) with the U.S. Department of State,
Diplomatic Security Service, being duly sworn, depose and state as follows:

Alleged Offense:

From in or about September 2021, through in or about August 2022, in the Northern District of Texas and elsewhere, defendant **Christian Martinez**, along with others known and unknown, did knowingly and willfully combine, conspire, confederate, and agree to commit bank fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1344, that is, to knowingly execute and attempt to execute a scheme and artifice to defraud a financial institution and to obtain money, funds, credits, and other property under the custody and control of, a financial institution, by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises, all in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1349.

Probable Cause:

1. I, Zachary Bowen, have been employed by the U.S. Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service as a Special Agent since 2015. I am currently assigned to the Dallas Resident Office in Dallas, Texas, and have been since August of 2020. During my time as a special agent, I have participated in investigations of passport fraud, visa fraud, money laundering, conspiracy, wire fraud, bank fraud, identity theft and fraudulent document investigations. I have attended and successfully completed the Criminal

Investigator Training Program at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, and the Basic Special Agent Course at the Diplomatic Security Training Center.

2. The information in this affidavit is based upon my own knowledge, records furnished to me in my official capacity and information provided by other law enforcement officials. This affidavit does not contain every material fact that I have learned during the course of this investigation and is only intended to show that there is sufficient probable cause to believe **Martinez** has violated United States Code 18 U.S.C. § 1349 (§ 1344).

Object of the Conspiracy

3. The object of the conspiracy was for **Martinez** and his coconspirators to obtain money by impersonating bank account-holder victims, each of whom are real persons, by opening fraudulent bank accounts in the victims' names, and then transferring money from those victims' real accounts into the fraudulent accounts **Martinez** and his coconspirators controlled.

Manner and Means of the Conspiracy and Scheme to Defraud

Summary

4. It was part of the conspiracy and the manner and means by which the conspiracy and scheme to defraud were accomplished that **Martinez** and his coconspirators would obtain and possess counterfeit U.S. Passport Cards ("Passport Cards"). The counterfeit Passport Cards bore the photographs of various coconspirators but used the names and other identifying information of the victims. (A Passport Card is a document that is

prescribed by statute and regulation for entry into the United States through land or sea ports of entry between the United States and Mexico, Canada, the Caribbean, and Bermuda.)

5. **Martinez** and his coconspirators chose as victims individuals whom they knew to have bank accounts at certain banks. **Martinez** and his coconspirators would then enter those banks and use the counterfeit Passport Cards to impersonate and fraudulently represent themselves as the victim account-holders. Each time they did so, another coconspirator acted as a “mule” and would enter the bank with the impersonator. The impersonator and mule would then open a fraudulent joint bank account in the names of the victim and the mule.

6. Once a fraudulent account was opened in the names of the victim account-holder and the mule, the coconspirators would then transfer money to the fraudulent bank account from the victim’s real bank account. The mule or another coconspirator would then withdraw money from the fraudulent bank account, or transfer the money to a third bank account that the coconspirators’ controlled.

Martinez and Acevedo

7. On or about January 30, 2022, in the Fort Worth Division of the Northern District of Texas, a police officer with the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport Department of Public Safety (DFW DPS) conducted a traffic stop and subsequently arrested Gregory Acevedo for possession of marijuana. During a search incident to arrest, the officer found in Acevedo’s possession ten counterfeit U.S. passport cards in ten different identities all

bearing a photo of Juan Cruz, a coconspirator charged in Case Number 4:22-CR-170. Two mobile phones were seized from Acevedo, and a forensic examination performed pursuant to a search warrant.

8. On or about May 26, 2022, Acevedo pled guilty to an Information charging Conspiracy to Commit Bank Fraud and Passport Fraud, in violation of 18 U.S.C § 371 (18 U.S.C. §§ 1344(2) and 1546(a)), and Aggravated Identity Theft, in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1028A. *See* 4:22-CR-137-P.

9. I reviewed the information extracted from Acevedo's phones and found that **Martinez** sent Acevedo the personally identifying information of bank fraud victims through various text messaging applications such as Telegram and iMessage. The information included the names, dates of birth, social security numbers, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, property ownership, employment information, and bank account numbers and balances (hereinafter "Targeting Information").

10. I reviewed communications in Acevedo's iPhone 11 and found a saved contact labeled "Taxes" with a phone number ending in x1178 and a Telegram Messenger ID ending in x6624. Department of State records show that on June 8, 2020, **Martinez** listed phone number x1178 as a primary contact number on a form DS-82 passport renewal application. T-mobile records confirm that phone number x1178 was registered to Martinez and active from April 4, 2018 to February 2, 2022.

11. I found an iMessage chat thread with **Martinez**—using phone number x1178, which begins on August 12, 2020 and ends on January 29, 2022. In this chat thread, I

found images of a person I determined to be **Martinez** through comparison to **Martinez's** passport application photo. I also found images of Cruz, images of thousands of dollars in \$100 bank notes inside Chase bank envelopes, and screenshots of appointment confirmations to open Chase bank accounts.

12. On October 19, 2021, **Martinez** texted the "targeting information" of Victim-1. Acevedo then sent that information to Jeremy Pena. Chase bank records show that on October 19, 2021, \$49,000 was transferred from Victim-1's legitimate accounts into a fraudulent account opened with a counterfeit passport card in Victim-1's identity. \$34,000 of the \$49,000 was withdrawn in cash or further transferred to other accounts.

13. Continuing in this chat thread, On January 26, 2022, **Martinez** texted Acevedo **Martinez's** lodging plan for **Martinez**, Acevedo, Cruz, three other known coconspirators (Coconspirator-1, Coconspirator-2, and Coconspirator-3), and others. **Martinez** texted the address of the house in Dallas, Texas that he was planning to reserve through Airbnb. Airbnb records confirmed that **Martinez** did in fact reserve that house for seven nights beginning on January 26, 2022.

14. In Acevedo's iPhone 13, I found a chat thread with Coconspirator-4. On the morning of January 26, 2022, Coconspirator-4 sent messages indicating **Martinez**, Acevedo, Coconspirator-1, Coconspirator-2, Coconspirator-3, and Cruz were coordinating bank fraud activities for the day.

15. On January 26, 2022, in the Northern District of Texas, **Martinez's** coconspirators opened a fraudulent joint bank account and transferred approximately \$56,000 from

Victim-2's real bank account into the fraudulent account. **Martinez's** coconspirators then transferred the money into another account controlled by the mule and then withdrew approximately \$48,000 in cash.

16. In Acevedo's phone I found a Telegram Messenger audio file in which the speaker states, in relevant part,

*"...Yo this Taxes [Martinez] bro....I wish I could give n***** seven thousand all the time but there's a whole lot that goes into this, a lot of pieces to the puzzle to make the puzzle work, you feel me. If I give you seven thousand I'm shorting my plug, the vendor that's giving us all the information, the intel in order for us to walk into the spot and score. Without him, we got nothing. Without me there's no IDs there's nothing else, you feel me. I gotta make IDs, I'm paying two hundred for IDs, I'm booking n***** flights, I'm getting rentals for n***** to move around in. If you was helping me with that then I'd understand, seven thousand is cool, but you're not helping with none of that bro, I'm doing all the work."*

Overt Acts


17. In furtherance of the conspiracy and to effect its object, on or about October 19, 2021, **Martinez** texted the "targeting information" of Victim-1. Acevedo then sent that information to Jeremy Pena. Chase bank records report that on October 19, 2021, \$49,000 was transferred from Victim-1's legitimate accounts into a fraud account opened with a counterfeit passport card in [REDACTED] identity.

18. Also in furtherance of the conspiracy, on or about January 26, 2022, **Martinez** rented a house in the Northern District of Texas through Airbnb in order to provide lodging for himself and his New York-based coconspirators to facilitate the bank fraud scheme.

19. Also in furtherance of the conspiracy, on or about January 26, 2022, in the Northern District of Texas and elsewhere, **Martinez** and his coconspirators transferred \$56,000 from Victim-2's account. **Martinez** and his coconspirators then traveled to five Chase bank branches within the Northern District of Texas and made cash withdrawals totaling approximately \$48,000.


Conclusion:

20. Based on the foregoing information, I respectfully submit that there is probable cause to believe that **Christian Martinez** has violated United States Code 18 U.S.C. § 1349 (18 U.S.C. § 1344) and did knowingly and willfully conspire to execute and attempt to execute a scheme and artifice to defraud a financial institution and to obtain money, funds, credits, and other property under the custody and control of, a financial institution, by means of false or fraudulent pretenses, representations, or promises.



Zachary Bowen, Special Agent
U.S. Department of State
Diplomatic Security Service

SWORN AND SUBSCRIBED before me, August 11, 2022, at 2:41 a.m./p.m.
in Fort Worth, Texas.



JEFFREY L. CURETON
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE